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Latest news from the REC

- The REC is currently updating its resources for the development and implementation of roadside vegetation management plans (RVMPs). There will be four resources on:
 - Assessment
 - Planning
 - Implementation
 - Monitoring & EvaluationFunding for the project was provided by the NSW Environmental Trust.

Roadside Environmental Management Award 2013 winners announced

The 2013 Local Government Excellence in the Environment Awards were presented at a ceremony held at the Powerhouse Museum on 3 December, 2013. The winners of the Roadside Environmental Management Category, sponsored by the NSW Roadside Environment Committee are detailed below:

Winner – Division B and Overall Category

Bathurst Regional Council for Protecting and Connecting Bathurst Copper Butterfly Habitat

This project improved habitat for the endangered Bathurst Copper Butterfly by controlling environmental weeds in High Conservation Value road reserves in known butterfly areas, and the revegetation of fragmented areas to improve connectivity across the sites. Given the unique requirements of the Bathurst Copper Butterfly, this project required careful and complex planning and implementation.

Contact: Mick Callan, Environmental Programs Coordinator, 02 6333 6285
michael.callan@bathurst.nsw.gov.au



Mick Callan, Bathurst Regional Council accepting the Roadside Environmental Management Award from Mr Neil Dufty, Executive Officer, NSW Roadside Environment Committee

Highly Commended – Division C

Hornsby Shire Council for Restoration of roadside Corridors and Vegetation Linkages in Hornsby Shire

The Restoration of Roadside Corridors and Linkages in Hornsby Shire Project aimed to enhance and raise awareness for these significant areas through bush restoration, awareness-raising and improved practices of Council staff through in-training workshops, production and distribution of Environmental Practices booklets for staff, and the installation of 'Significant Roadside Environment Area' signs throughout the Shire.

Contact: Donna Fitton, Project Manager - Environmental Scientist Bushland Operations Phone 02 9847 6976 dfitton@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

(more details of this project in the following article)

Winner – Division C

Hunter & Central Coast Regional Environmental Management Strategy (HCCREMS) for Regional Initiatives to restore threatened species, improve water quality and constrain exotic grass dispersal

In undertaking five roadside management projects, these councils have protected and rehabilitated key roadside areas including three endangered communities and three threatened species. They have also added 54 new sites to the regional roadside marker scheme, delivered training and information resources to councils. A further 36 water crossing sites were audited and included in the road marker scheme to facilitate management practices to improve regional water quality. The projects have also effectively constrained the inter-council spread of highly invasive Coolatai grass, a weed in the region.

Contact: Steve Wilson, HCCREMS Regional Program Manager Phone 02 4978 4026 steve@huntercouncils.com.au

On the verge in Hornsby LGA

Within the Hornsby LGA, a significant amount of remnant vegetation exists on roadside verges. In the rural areas, the majority of this vegetation is listed as Endangered Ecological Communities (EECs). In February 2012, Hornsby Shire Council received a Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP) grant from Local Government NSW to restore rural and significant roadside corridors and vegetation linkages in Hornsby Shire.

A major component of the grant focused on on-ground restoration works which included woody weed control and revegetation. To support and promote these works, Council conducted in-house training for field staff on environmental work practices and the installation of signage to identify significant remnant vegetation.

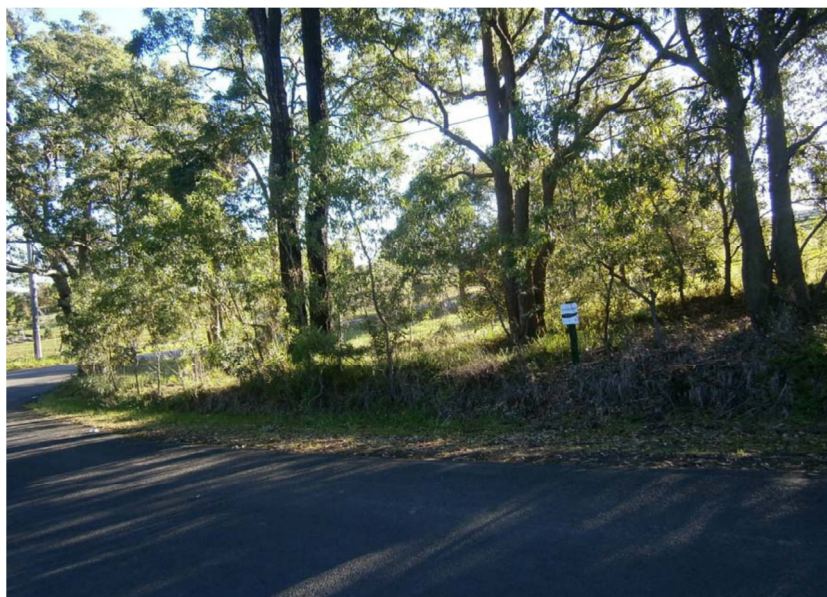
Over the course of the project, achievements included:

- 60 Council field staff from Parks and Works Department participated in training session to increase awareness and knowledge of location, identification and management of threatened species and EECs.
- Production and distribution of Environmental Practices training manual to field staff. This booklet identifies threatened flora and fauna, common weeds and treatment, and significant roadside vegetation within Hornsby LGA.
- Production, installation and mapping of 75 x "Significant Roadside Environment Area" signs in rural and urban areas.
- Total of 13 sites enhanced by bush restoration works. Sites were assessed and mapped with majority of work occurring in areas of EECs.
- Liaison and consultation with various stakeholder groups to maximise on-ground work.

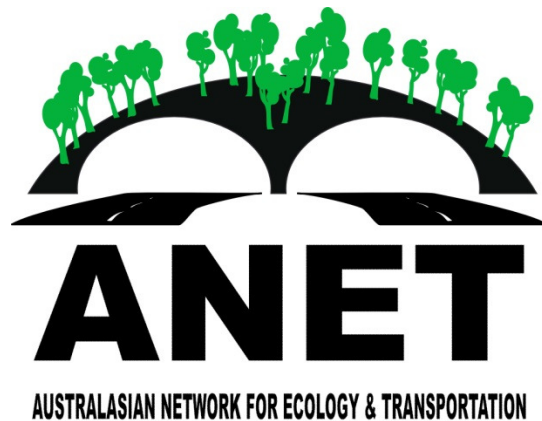
Overall, the project has been very successful with continued support and funding directed to follow up works. It has also allowed Council to develop environmental training resources and foster relationships with other branches within Council. This can often be a challenging aspect of managing roadside vegetation, when other departments within Council have different management objectives and practices.

For more details contact: Donna Fitton, Project Manager - Environmental Scientist Bushland Operations Phone 02 9847 6976 dfitton@hornsby.nsw.gov.au

*Roadside verge in Dural, where restoration works occurred and sign installed.
Photo: D.Fitton*



The Australasian Network for Ecology and Transport (ANET) Conference



ANET is a professional network for all people involved in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and research of linear infrastructure and the environment.

Roads, railways and utility easements are conspicuous and pervasive components of almost all landscapes around the world. The impacts of linear infrastructure and the vehicles they carry are considerable and are responsible for the mortality of hundreds of thousands of animals each year, the decline of populations and disruption to ecosystem function. Road ecology is a relatively new discipline that aims to understand impacts and offer strategies and approaches to avoid, minimise, mitigate and offset these impacts.

ANET will hold its inaugural conference on **20-24 July 2014** in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales. The conference will be an excellent opportunity to learn more and share your experiences with others.

Key Dates:

7 April 2014 - Symposia proposals due

12 May 2014 - Abstracts due

Further program and conference registration information will be posted on the ANET website www.ecoltrans.net

ANET focuses on the Australasian region but is open to anyone from around the globe. To register you or your organisation's interest in becoming a part of ANET, please email info@ecoltrans.net.

Plenary speakers: Professor [John Altringham](#), from the University of Leeds in the UK, and Professor [Andrew Bennett](#), from Deakin University Melbourne, will be giving what promise to be engaging talks.

Field trip: We will visit sites along the Pacific Highway that demonstrate the evolution in best-practice road planning, design and mitigation in New South Wales and Australia, including fencing, underpasses, land bridges, glider poles, and canopy bridges.

Cat's Claw Creeper eradication project in Hawkesbury LGA

(Source: Hawkesbury Environment Network [HEN] media release)

When Hawkesbury Environment Network (HEN) started the Cat's Claw Creeper Weed Control project back in July 2013 it didn't realise the extent of the spread of this beautiful but deadly weed. However, during summer it can be seen everywhere; garlands of big yellow trumpet-shaped flowers cascading from the heights of all sorts of trees: pines, white cedars, privet, tallest eucalypts and jacarandas!

What is happening is the blooming summer show of a garden plant which escaped into roadsides and bushland across the area. Cat's Claw Creeper is a weed of the highest order capable of smashing whole trees and destroying forests as it smothers the native eucalypts and bushland below them.

Killing the vine is easy, just cut it and the top all dies off. However, its seeds blow and wash down into drains and stormwater carries them to the creeks; seedlings then send out tendrils and these grow tubers everywhere the vines touch the ground ; these tubers re-sprout when the vine is cut. That's why it is listed as a WONS (Weed of National Significance). It seems that ecologists have been aware that its spread will increase as weather patterns alter along the eastern coast.

The HEN project has now mapped many hectares of affected property and bushland. Letters sent to affected households were unfortunately unsuccessful as the timing for these coincided with the severe fire danger period.

HEN has now established a working partnership with Hawkesbury River County Council and Hawkesbury City Council. The plan is now to start treating the affected roadside trees first at the junction of Bells Line of Road and Comleroy Road near the turnoff to Kurrajong village. This project has recently commenced across a roadside corridor which has four land managers: Roads and Maritime Services, Endeavour Energy, Telstra and Hawkesbury City Council.

Further contacts about the Cat's Claw Control program can be obtained by phoning Hawkesbury River County Council (HRCC) (02) 4574 9600 | E: council@hrcc.nsw.gov.au W: www.hrcc.nsw.gov.au. More information about HEN and this project can be obtained by contacting HEN by email robin@hen.org.au or phone 0414 672 014 to report its location.

The Cat's Claw Creeper Control project is supported by Greater Sydney Local Land Services (GSLLS) through funding from the Australian Government.



*Cat's
Claw
Creeper in
flower*

Achievements from Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project #1

Efforts are underway across NSW councils to improve the management of roadside reserve areas. The NSW Environmental Trust has funded two separate rounds of grant funding aimed at assisting councils to undertake on-ground works in their roadside reserves, which has enabled renewed effort in actively managing these areas. The project, entitled the Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project (RVIP) has been administered by Local Government NSW on behalf of the NSW Environmental Trust.

While considerable planning work has been undertaken, few resources have been available to implement the management actions as identified in roadside management plans or similar plans for these areas. The RVIP has provided this opportunity through the provision of grants to councils to do on-ground works, often involving weeding and regeneration of the sites to improve integrity and resilience.

Phase 1 of the RVIP is almost complete with \$1.28m in devolved grants being provided to councils. The outcomes reported to date are impressive. Across 28 projects involving 31 councils, an area of over 3,700,000 square metres of linear reserves has been regenerated and weeds removed from a total area of over 15,000,000 square metres. Over 10,000 individual plants have been established and revegetation works have occurred across over 450,000 square metres of roadside reserve.

While the extent of on-ground activity is impressive, there has also been a simultaneous effort made to improve the knowledge of council staff and councillors through holding a total of 29 training sessions, with 426 people participating in these sessions. This training has been delivered across all levels of councils ranging from managers, planners and engineers through to outdoor works crews, who are fundamental to the everyday management of roadsides areas through their maintenance activities.

Tangible environmental benefits have been achieved in the delivery of the project outcomes; however, an important legacy of the project will also be the knowledge and understanding of working in the roadside environment. The project has produced three videos which will be used to encourage other councils to actively work on their roadside reserves. The videos can be viewed by clicking on the following links:

- [Palerang Council and the Oallen Roadside Restoration](#)
- [Bathurst Regional Council Protecting and Connecting the Bathurst Copper Butterfly Habitat](#)
- [Hunter Councils Conservation of Weeping Myall Populations in Roadsides](#)

Phase 2 of the project provided a further \$900,000 to councils, including two regional groups of councils working together on larger scale projects (see following article). The outcomes of these projects will be completed and reported on after June 2014. Further opportunities for funding will be at the discretion of the NSW Environmental Trust; however, there is considerable interest from councils for assistance in both preparing and updating plans and implementing these and Local Government NSW looks forward to working with the Trust on future funding opportunities for NSW local government.

More details from Kirsty McIntyre, Local Government NSW, phone 02 9242 4055
Email: Kirsty.McIntyre@lgnsw.org.au

Regional roadside vegetation project in the Murray Catchment

The Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC) is currently implementing its NSW Environmental Trust funded "Roadside Vegetation Implementation Project- Linking, Thinking and Acting: Roadside Vegetation in the Murray Catchment". The project involves nine local government bodies across the Murray region and is supported through Local Government NSW with Murray Local Land Services (LLS) as a partner organisation providing project support.

The project has an extended completion date to June 2014 and aims to increase awareness of the value of roadside vegetation through Council training, signage and developing a Roadside Management Handbook, which will provide guidelines for planning and implementing works on road reserves. Another important aim is to improve regional vegetation connectivity by enhancing medium conservation value roadsides through direct seeding of locally native understorey species.

Direct seeding began in Spring 2013 with roadsides in Lockhart Shire being completed. There are over 400 kilometres of seeding scheduled for Autumn 2014 across several other Shire areas. The first training day on roadside environment training for Council staff was held in May 2013 with an expression of interest recently encouraging staff members from the region's Councils to participate in further training days to be held in March.

Galenia pubescens is a groundcover weed that is spreading along roads in the western region. RAMROC through the RVIP is partnering with Central Murray County Council (CMCC) to undertake a spraying program designed to reduce the extent of the weed, especially from areas of high quality roadside vegetation.

To add value to the RVIP, Murray Local Land Services is providing funding to engage a contractor to digitise all existing Council Roadside Vegetation Management Plans in the Murray region into a format that is useful for Council and talks to Council's asset register.

For more information on the project contact Ray Stubbs (RAMROC) rstubbs@alburycity.nsw.gov.au or project officer Natasha Lappin (Murray LLS) natasha.lappin@lls.nsw.gov.au



Local Land
Services
Murray



Regeneration works in Bankstown LGA

The Bankstown Bushland Society received a \$56,000 NSW Environmental Trust grant in 2012 to carry out bush regeneration works in two areas of remnant bushland on opposite sides of Milperra Road near Bankstown Airport.

These areas of remnant bushland are part of the Milperra Wetlands classified by the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage as Freshwater Wetlands on Coastal Floodplains and listed as an Endangered Ecological Community.

The objective of this project was to raise community awareness of the significance of natural areas and protect them from development such as road widening. Earth Repair Ecology Pty Ltd was contracted to carry out this work.

Works to date have included extensive primary control for woody weeds including Small and Broad Leaf Privet, Green Cestrum and Lantana. Cut material has been piled in situ as fauna habitat.

In order to prevent cleared areas from being colonised by annual and perennial weeds such as Cobblers Peg, Paddys Lucerne, Wandering Jew and *Ehrharta*, high volume herbicide spraying was carried out in the more disturbed areas along the road batter. A flame weeder was used in more resilient areas to control regenerating weed seedlings, particularly Paddys Lucerne and Cobblers Peg. The use of a flame weeder eliminated the need to remove these weeds from around native grasses and herbs which would have been the case if back pack spraying had been employed. Works will also include extensive high volume spraying for Alligator Weed.



Cut material has been piled in situ as fauna habitat.

For more details contact Chris Brogan, Earth Repair Ecology, phone (02) 9774 3200.



Small Purple-pea conservation

John Holland Rail Pty Ltd (JHRP/L) has initiated a project to increase the population size and enrich the genetic diversity of the Mandurama Small Purple-pea population. In small populations, Small Purple-pea (*Swainsona recta*) can begin to inbreed resulting in a seeding fitness depression that affects germination.

JHRP/L is drawing on the expertise of other conservation agencies to assist with the planning and delivery of a propagation and replanting project. The project would involve collecting seed from the Mandurama population, growing plants in a controlled environment and re-introducing the plants back into the rail corridor.

The conservation works include collaborating with John Briggs of the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage who has over 30 years' experience in threatened species protection and management. John originally identified the Mandurama population back in 1996. In addition, David Taylor (Curator of the Canberra Australian National Botanic Gardens) will bring his expertise of Small Purple-pea seed collection, pre-treatment and propagation to the project. The Small Purple-pea is very difficult to propagate but with the assistance of the Australian National Botanic Gardens, specialist nursery facilities and laboratories successful germination can be achieved.

The project commenced in October 2013, starting with the identification and marking out of the plants in the field. Seeds were bagged to protect from insect predation whilst they mature, and were harvested on 18 December by the JHRP/L Environment team (see photo). The seedlings will be grown at the Australian National Botanic Gardens nursery and hopefully there will be approximately 50 seedlings to plant in September 2014.



The plantings would be maintained and monitored for the following few years. The ultimate goal is to collect further seed for the National Seed Bank that can be used for future conservation research for the Small Purple-pea across NSW, ACT and Victoria.

For more details contact Amber Gibbins on (02) 4028 9409



Bilateral assessment agreement with the Commonwealth

In November 2013, the Commonwealth and NSW Governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to streamline the assessment and approvals process for NSW projects that impact on matters of national environmental significance under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act). The MOU proposes a 'one-stop-shop' for assessment and approvals of these projects, to remove duplication, inject greater certainty into the decision making process and speed-up decision making time frames. To achieve this more streamlined approach, the two governments will enter into bilateral agreements.

The exhibition of the first bilateral agreement, which accredits NSW to conduct a single environmental assessment process for NSW projects that have to be considered under the EPBC Act, concluded on 18 December 2013. The bilateral agreement has now been signed by the Commonwealth Minister for the Environment and the NSW Minister for Planning & Infrastructure. A copy of the submissions report can be found at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/topics/environment-protection/environment-assessments/bilateral-agreements/nsw>

By April 2014, the two governments have agreed to develop a second bilateral agreement, which will accredit NSW to oversee both the assessment and approval of these projects.

Sustainable Roads Forums for Local Government

Sustainable Choice is running a series of Sustainable Roads Forums for Local Government. The series is featuring the 2013 overall category winner for the Roadside Environmental Management Award, Bathurst Regional Council for protecting with their Copper Butterfly Habitat. Up to date information about all forums as they arise are available [online](http://www.lgnsw.org.au/events-training) at <http://www.lgnsw.org.au/events-training>. Sustainable Choice is a partnership program between Local Government NSW and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage.

Sustainable Public Infrastructure workshop

IPWEA NSW is pleased to present a new workshop on Sustainable Public Infrastructure.

The objective of this course is to bring together industry, council and community leaders who are designing and building sustainable neighbourhoods. Learn how to make your neighbourhoods sustainable. Whether it's water, wastewater (sewage), designing and building cool roads to cool suburbs, costs to build and maintain infrastructure, urban farming, data collection and analysis, laws or social media - the tools, the passion, the mistakes and successes and how to obtain approvals required to bring about change; these will be available to you at this workshop.

The guest speaker is Michael Mobbs, a former Environmental Lawyer who specialises in the design, construction and project management of sustainable food, water, energy and recycled water projects for the residential and commercial markets of Australia.

VENUE:
Mercure Sydney Hotel
818-820 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

DATE:
Wed 26 March 2014 -
Thurs 27 March 2014

Full details available at www.ipwea.org/nsw

19th Australasian Weeds Conference

The Tasmanian Weeds Society, in conjunction with the Council of Australasian Weeds Societies Inc. extends a warm invitation for you to join us in Hobart in September 2014 for the 19th Australasian Weeds Conference.

The conference will be held at the Hotel Grand Chancellor, on the stunning Hobart waterfront, from Monday 1st September to Thursday 4th September 2014.

This conference in Hobart promises to be an exciting and enjoyable event that will focus on the conference theme of 'Science, Community and Food Security: the Weed Challenge'. The theme reflects the changing state and developing challenges management and will highlight with new developments internationally and nationally.

Abstract submissions have been extended until Friday 14th February 2014

More details about the conference at <http://australasianweeds2014.com.au/>

The aim of this newsletter is to share information about the management of NSW linear reserve environments and profile the NSW Roadside Environment Committee (REC). For more information on the REC, including how to develop roadside vegetation management plans, go to:

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/environment/roadsideenvironcommittee/>

Please contact the REC Executive Officer (details below) if you wish to subscribe or unsubscribe.



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